



Urban Trackers

3 x 25 min Documentary Series
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“Urban Trackers” Project Design

The Project

“Urban Trackers” will be a 3 x half hour series for the ABC Message Stick Program. The Message Stick is a weekly television program which focuses on Indigenous peoples and issues of importance to them. The content of “Urban Trackers” will revolve around documenting 2 or 3 Indigenous cadet’s experiences as they attempt the PROVE training course at the Queensland Police Training Academy at Oxley, Queensland.

The Purpose of the Project

To demonstrate to a National Indigenous audience that black faces can wear blue uniforms. As a high and disproportionate percentage of Indigenous peoples have been involved with the police and the courts this series will demonstrate that Indigenous people can take an active participation in the process of law and order and that they need to be community leaders.

The Production Team

This series will be produced by Dr Daryl Sparkes of the Media Department of the University of Southern Queensland, Springfield Campus, under the guise of the production company Mianjin Entertainment, a film and television production company which works primarily with Indigenous peoples on Indigenous topics for the ABCTV and SBSTV.

The series itself will be commissioned and funded by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABCTV), Screen Australia and Screen Queensland. It will be directed by the noted Indigenous television director, Rhonda Hagan. There will be 2 camera crews comprising of a camera operator and a sound recordist. The series will be made under the direct supervision of the ABC.

What we need from the Queensland Police Service

It is obvious that for a series like this to succeed we would need the co-operation of the Queensland Police Service and the Queensland Police Training Academy at Oxley. Included in this would be the need to gain the written approval and co-operation of 3 Indigenous Australians who are undertaking the PROVE program in November 2010 and, to a lesser extent, the other recruits who are in their classes as they may also appear on screen.

We would also need the written permission of their lecturers/instructors. We would also have to get permission from the 3 Indigenous recruits that are chosen to film their families for brief instances, if that was permitted. All of this would need to be put into contracts so that both parties, QPS and the ABC, understood what was being offered and agreed to. These contracts will be organized by our solicitors for the QPS.

It is understood and agreed that the QPS will not have to contribute any funds at any stage to the development or production of the series. If, during the production of the series, costs are incurred to the QPS, all costs will be reimbursed/paid for by the production company.

The logistics if it all

Although the PROVE program runs for a total of 30 weeks we will not have to be there every day or during every session. Many of the recruit's activities involve classroom activities that wouldn't be suitable for television. However, we would be present on certain days most weeks as well as during some off-duty hours. We would also want to interview various people involved in the production such as the Indigenous recruits who will feature in the series, other recruits, their instructors and management of the Academy.

At most, but not all, situations we film there will be 2 cameras present. The attached treatment is a scene by scene breakdown of how the filmmakers would envisage the action happening, although this may not accurately reflect exactly what occurs at the Academy or the completed project. It is more of a guide to what we think we will film and how we can tailor the footage for dramatic effect while also delivering the important messages of the film. We are happy to show all footage filmed to the QPS and gain advice at rough cut stage, however, it would have to be included in the contract that final cut rests with the ABC and the production company.

However, it is agreed in good faith that this series has an upbeat and positive message for Indigenous peoples and it would be against the filmmakers and the series best interest and intent to depict negative stereotypes of the Police or Indigenous peoples.

The Next Step

The documents attached need to be examined and perused by the Senior Management of the QPS and the Academy. Then a discussion may take place on points included in the document that may need change. If the QPS is in agreement that the series should go ahead then we would move to a contract stage.

Urban Trackers

3 Queensland Murries face an up hill battle to make it through the tough training course at the Queensland Police Academy and become Police officers.

Synopsis

Urban Trackers follows the lives of 2/3 Indigenous people as they join the Queensland Police Service.

We follow the 2 or 3 of them as they face the trials and tribulations going through the Queensland Police Academy to become constables.

This film documents the highs and lows, struggles and successes of these 2/3 pioneers while asking the questions: Can the face of law and order be accepted as black in the mostly white cities and towns of Queensland? And will this acceptance flow into the Murri communities?

Urban Trackers

Introduction

The first Aboriginal man to receive the Albert Medal for Bravery (the highest award possible for police officers) was a man known as 'Neighbour', who was awarded the medal for rescuing a police officer from the flooding Wilton River, in the Roper River area of the Northern Territory in south-east Arnhem Land in 1911. 'Neighbour' rescued the policeman, who was clinging precariously to some pandanus palms in the middle of the fast-flowing water, whilst wearing heavy chains around his neck. 'Neighbour' went on to work as a tracker with the Northern Territory Police.

Until 1900, many Aboriginal men and some women worked as police trackers, often on a casual basis or sometimes for longer stints. Often they were only paid a few shillings with rations supplied to their families. Trackers were employed full-time by the Northern Territory police until the late 1980s when they began to be phased out. Northern Territory artist Long Tom Tjapanangka worked both as a stock hand and police tracker for years before commencing his artistic career.

Yuendumu man Teddy Egan is probably the best known tracker in Australia today. In 1967, he assisted in the capture of an escaped murder suspect after two police officers were wounded in the pursuit. In 2000, he helped Northern Territory police to recapture an escaped prisoner. Egan says that tracking humans is much easier than tracking animals, because 'people make too much mess.' He was also one of four trackers used by Barrow Creek police to try to find missing English tourist Peter Falconio.

The Australian police still occasionally call on the services of Aboriginal trackers, particularly in Western Australia, Queensland and the Northern Territory. In 1980, several Aboriginal trackers joined the search for missing baby Azaria Chamberlain after she disappeared from a campsite near Uluru.

It has only been in recent decades that significant numbers of Indigenous Australians have joined the ranks of the Queensland Police Service as officers, as being distinct from being trackers.

The 1990's saw a marked increase of Indigenous people come into law enforcement, but more as Community Liaison Officers who, although undertaking some training in law enforcement, do not have the power to apprehend or arrest. However, over recent years there has been increasing enrolment into the ranks.

QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE AND ABORIGINAL/POLICE RELATIONS

The Fitzgerald Report was the catalyst for the most revolutionary changes in the history of the Queensland Police Service. One of the major changes recommended by the report was the introduction of community policing as a basic policing philosophy. The definition of *community policing* is:

“an approach to police work which recognises and fosters a partnership between the service and the community. It involves police and the community working together to identify and solve policing problems”. (*Cross Cultural Policing in Queensland* p. 1).

In 1990, to assist in the introduction and implementation of the community policing philosophy into the Queensland Police Service a new branch, the Community Safety and Crime Prevention Branch was created which included the Cultural Advisory Unit.

In addition, the Service has established a network of regional police who are designated as cross-cultural liaison officers in each region. These positions have responsibility for making links with community organisations and individuals, working with the community to identify and solve policing problems, and facilitating communication between police and the communities.

Instructions issued in June 1991 also formalised their role in negotiation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups in potential crowd conflicts where there may be police action taken against individuals at a large gathering involving Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people to which police have been called. Under those instructions, the commissioned officer in charge must consider arranging for attendance of the liaison officer to assist in Aboriginal Justice Issues reducing the risk of the incident escalating. There are currently over 40 police officers in full and part-time liaison positions across the eight regions.

Communication

The need to establish and maintain strong effective relationships between police and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at a local level is now considered a major priority for community policing by the Service. This is reflected in the strategic plan for cross-cultural policing in Queensland and has four main objectives:

- To increase community involvement in addressing policing issues.
- To increase police service members' understanding of the needs of Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and ethnic communities and individuals.
- To increase the number of police service members from indigenous and Ethnic backgrounds.
- To improve the manner in which the police service responds to the needs of Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and ethnic people.

The New Breed of Cop

However, now the Queensland Police Service has recognised that Indigenous people need to go take an active part in policing not only their own communities but also need to be seen out in the largely white cities and towns, demonstrating to all that in this new millenium law and order can also have a black face. Indigenous people are being selected around the State to undertake the Queensland Police training course at the Queensland Police Academy.

The idea is not only to send Murri Police Officers to Murri populated areas, but also to have them work amongst largely white populated areas, mainly in the big cities, thus trying to change the often held and media enforced belief that many Indigenous people are lawless. Seeing Black faces in blue uniforms will change the negative stereotypes of Murries in the white community.

But the question is, can black police be accepted not only by the largely white criminal population they will have to deal with, but by their own people, who they will have to deal with at times. Or will they be treated as just a return to the old “Native Police” of yore?

The Documentary

With all of this in mind, we want to create an observational documentary film which follows a number of Indigenous recruits as they try to get through the extremely difficult and trying 30 week PROVE course of the Queensland Police Academy to become Police Constables. This film will follow the lives of two or three Murries who come together as they develop their professional careers in the Queensland Police Service.

Quite simply, this will be the undeniable story of how difficult it is to become a police officer, regardless of your race. Underlying this is the question of the unique and individual skills and nuances an Indigenous person brings to the job of being either a Police Officer. Afterall, it was precisely the honed, innate skill as a precise observationalist that made the “Tracker” of ages past so treasured amongst the white law enforcement agencies.

The documentary is divided into 3 chronological segments.

1) We see our characters before they go through their training. We see their home lives, their families, their communities and examine exactly why they want to either join the Service or move further up the scale in their career.

2) Then we see them going through the trials and tribulations of their training.

3) Finally we follow them through the first few weeks of their new jobs and witness how they deal with the issues that are unique to Indigenous Police. We document how each of them deal with the crimes and criminals they will have to face on a daily basis.

We will see the ups and downs, the failures and successes as each of our newly graduated recruits battles their inner selves and the criminals to be Queensland Indigenous Police Officers. But we will also see the reaction that many, both black and white, have when confronted by an Indigenous police Officer. And the question still remains: Can Murri people themselves accept their own who are in the Service?

"It's quite a scary thing when you think about it. The level of responsibility that is. But Murries need to be seen in positions of responsibility, of authority. I guess more black faces in the blue suit is one way to do it. People can start to place a bit more trust and can identify with the people who are in the blue suit."

The documentary series is divided into 3 episodes covering the linear chronology of the experiences of our three police recruits.

Episode 1:

We see our characters before they go through their training. We see their home lives, their families, their communities and examine exactly why they want to join the Service. We see them as they undertake moving to Brisbane and into the Police Academy and their first few weeks of the 30 week course. This is where the nerves kick in, the indecision "Have I done the right thing?", the sinking feeling that the fantasy of joining the Academy is a lot different from the reality. The recruits go through their introductions to the other recruits, settling in to their dormitory rooms and taking the lay of the new land.

All of our recruits begin their first weeks of training and the experience of the new is very difficult. New techniques, new equipment, new people, new rules and regulations and lots of new learning. The first episode ends as all of our recruits get involved in their training full-time with the realisation of just how difficult this is going to be.

Episode 2:

We see our new recruits going through the trials and tribulations of the next 20 weeks of training at the Academy. A mix of hard, physical action as the recruits mix it with guns, unarmed self defense, arrest and interview techniques interspersed with lighter moments during down time with the other recruits as well as their less action filled classes. But as the training gets harder and the pressure to succeed builds it tests our recruits to the limit.

We then move to halfway through the training process when our trainees are released from training for two weeks of holiday. We follow them as they go home at the Christmas break and witness how their families, friends and communities react to them. Do they notice any changes? Are people scared or distant and distrustful of them? How have the recruits themselves changed from when we saw them at the beginning of the first episode? Do others notice the change?

Then holidays are over and we are back at the Academy where things are hotting up as the training intensifies. But all of this comes at a price. The physical and mental strain involved in the training takes its toll and pushes the recruits to the edge of their own personal and professional lives. But there is also time here for the recruits to get to know each other and a few different social events leads to moments of bonding and discovering each other away from the classes of the Academy.

But the end of this episode leads to high drama as the recruits face the first of their last five weeks, the hardest five weeks, as they are released from the Academy and placed in city and suburban police stations where they are coached by senior and more experienced police officers. The change from the closeted environment of the Academy to the streets will take its toll.

Episode 3:

In the last 5 weeks the recruits are placed in some very dangerous situations as they have to deal with their final exams and practical assessments, in a whole lot of different and dangerous situations. This is where their mettle is tested and they experience what it will be like to be a real police officer. And the question starts rising – Can I do this for the rest of my working life?

When the recruits return to the Academy it is now time for their final exams. The pressure is on. The final episode ends with our recruits have finally made it through their 30 weeks of basic training and are getting ready for their graduation. Their families have turned up for the event and there is much pomp and circumstance.

We then follow the recruits through their first few weeks on the beat as genuine police officers, with all the pride and problems that come with that. We witness how they deal with the issues that are unique to Indigenous Police and we document how each of them deal with the crimes and criminals they will have to face on a daily basis.

Summary

We will see the ups and downs, the failures and successes as each of our new recruits battles their inner selves and the criminals to be among the first Queensland Indigenous Police Officers. But we will also see the reaction that many, both black and white, have when confronted by an Indigenous police Officer. Are the old sentiments against Indigenous Officers still lingering? And can Murri people themselves accept others who are now in the Force?

Documentary Script

Characters

For the sake of clarity and ease of reading I have named the characters in the following script. Obviously, these will not be the names of our real recruits. I have named them Johnny, and May, although we may also follow a third person through the PROVE course.

Episode and Scene Breakdown

Episode 1

Scene 1

We start not at the end or at the beginning but somewhere in the middle. A fight has broken out on a Saturday night in Brisbane's Fortitude Valley. Imagine a place that is literally three blocks wide by three blocks long packed with about 10,000 people, mostly aged 18-25. But 'The Valley', on the fringe of the city, also hides a secret population, one that most people don't notice, or more likely choose to ignore. This area has historically contained the cast outs and fringe dwellers of white suburban society – the smack addicts, the homeless, the mentally ill and the indigenous. In the middle of this fight are a squad of police who are trying to sort it all out. As quickly as the crowd come together to watch the fight they dissipate, most wandering into the night. But the police have made a few arrests.

Tonight, like many nights, the dispute is between some young tradies, restless from a day laying bricks, and some older guys, usually over a girl or a random remark. But the thing that is the most surprising is that in the middle of it is

that the attending police officer is Black. An Indigenous police officer, a rarity in Brisbane..... Queensland...or even Australia. And it shows on the hundreds of white faces that walk by during the arrest, faces that have a look of amazement on them, from seeing something that is quite uncommon, an Aboriginal person in a police uniform. This is Johnny. We follow him as he takes one of the young assailants into custody and locks him in the back of a paddy wagon (we blur out the face of the assailant). He tells us that this is his first week on the beat, and he is just realising how tough it is and what he, as a Police Officer, has to go through to keep the peace amongst a large crowd of drunks and kids. Johnny's radio blurts out that there is more trouble down the road. He races off with other officers into the night.....

Scene 2

A young Black woman does a roll in front of us and fires off three shots from her pistol. She then runs behind a barricade and fires off another round. She quickly runs to another barricade and fires her weapon at targets that remain unseen.....

The titles appear on the screen, ***“Urban Trackers”***.

Scene 3

We have gone back in both time and space and we are with another person. This is May. She is packing her bags. She walks into her lounge room where her mother and brothers are and they become all excited, hugging and kissing her. They make a complete fuss over her as she exits the door. May is now travelling in a taxi to the airport. She is very nervous and anxious. She also tells us this is the first time she has lived away from home. We see the palm trees and the sparse buildings that show that we are in a small north Queensland town. She arrives at the airport and she enters the terminal but we still don't know where she is going....

Scene 4

We are with the young Black man that we saw at the beginning of the film. He is not in police uniform now, but kicking around in the dusty streets of his western Queensland community, just outside of Cunnamulla. This is Johnny, we saw him earlier in a police uniform. We see him as hangs out with his young friends in the park. But while others have a drink and a smoke, Johnny swigs from a water bottle. He tells us about growing up in Cunnamulla, about the lack of opportunities from many of the young people, especially Indigenous, unless they want to work as stockmen or farm hands, which doesn't really appeal to Johnny after he tried it a few times.

Scene 5

We are talking to the local constabulary of Cunnamulla, a couple of

constables and a sergeant. They talk about how peaceful the community usually is, that there is very little trouble around the place. They tell us about the most common sort of crimes in the area.

Scene 6

We talk to some of the other kids hanging around Cunnamulla. What do they think of the police in their town? What do they think of police in general?

Scene 7

We are at Johnny's house with his mum and dad and six brothers and sisters, all living together in a two bedroom fibreboard house. Johnny talks about why he made the decision to join the Queensland Police Service and what his family thinks about it. His parents and brothers/sisters tell us how they feel about their son joining the force.

Scene 8

We're back with the same kids as before and gauge their opinions when we tell them that their friend Johnny is going to the Police Academy to become a Police Officer.

Scene 9

A plane touches down at the airport. May is in another taxi going through Brisbane city, the first time she has been to the city. She marvels at the new sights. The taxi goes through some austere looking gates. Finally we see a sign. "Queensland Police Training Academy". May gives out a squeal of delight. She tells us this was always her dream to join the Police and her dream was now coming true.

Scene 10

Johnny is unpacking his bag in the dormitory of the Academy. He has travelled by car for two days to get here and is exhausted....and scared. He has his own room but a share bathroom. There are another 20 raw recruits on the floor with him. 70 in the Academy overall. He unpacks his bags and then goes out to look around and meet the other recruits.

Scene 11

We interview the Head of the Police Academy. He explains that there have not been many Aboriginal people through the Academy over the years, compared to white recruits, but that they will not be treated any different from the other recruits. He tells us that there is a drop out rate of around 20% to 30%, so the chances of May or Johnny getting through means one out of every three-four goes home.

Scene 12

A party is going on. Less a party and more of a gathering, of over 70 people. These are the recruits and this is their meet and greet. May and Johnny are two Black faces in a sea of white, although there are about another 7 or 8 other Indigenous recruits. Do they get any special attention? Possibly not, but they do stand out from the crowd. We briefly speak to a few of the other newbies about their backgrounds and why they are here. May and Johnny greet each other, having never before met. We hear what they say to each other. The man we were speaking to before, the Head of the Academy, is in front of a microphone welcoming the guests. He tells them that they are here for the next 30 weeks and that it is going to be tough, not all of them will make it...that sort of blurb. Johnny has a slight grin on his face but May looks concerned.

Scene 13

We are with Johnny, alone in his room. He now tells us why he decided to join the Service. He tells us that his home town was a dead end. If he hung around he'd end up either working on one of the properties or, worse still, just hang around in the park drinking. When some police recruiters came to Cunnamulla he thought, why not? But he doesn't know what to expect now and he's sure it isn't going to be good.

Scene 14

Title white on black - **"Week 1"**

Scene 15

May and Johnny are dressed in blue jumpsuit uniforms and are standing on the parade ground of the Academy. They are being addressed by one of the Deputy Commissioners about what it means to be in the Service and told what is going to happen to them over the next 30 weeks. There will be highs and lows, many moments of danger and learning how to deal with that danger. The recruits will be testing themselves to the limit.

Scene 16

The group of recruits are split into groups, or 'squads', of around 20-30. Each squad is assigned a facilitator, an instructor who will supervise their training.

Scene 17

The first class Johnny is put through is learning how to march up and down the parade ground. He is totally uncoordinated and can't put a foot right. He just can't seem to get it right so the instructor gives him individual attention. Soon enough he is getting it right.

Scene 18

Johnny and May are in their first class where the instructor spells out what is going to happen to them over the next 30 weeks. They are told it will be a mix of physical and academic studies and they will be continually assessed. May seems confident but Johnny looks a bit worried.

Scene 19

We are at the introduction to weapons training with both May and Johnny. They are shown how to use their handguns – the latest Glock pistols. Their instructor goes through the operation of the pistols, how to load/unload, take aim, things like that. Both Johnny and May seem a bit apprehensive at first and they are both taken aback by the weight and size of the weapons.

Scene 20

A Forensics Investigator is taking class with the group. He is going over what police need to know when they enter a crime scene, what they should touch, what they shouldn't. It all comes under Major Crime Scene Preservation. Disrupting a crime scene could mean a criminal getting away. He shows them how forensics gather DNA and other evidence and why it is important for attending police officers to help with protecting and gathering the material. The Forensics Investigator tells them that DNA material is taken to the Forensics laboratory and analysed to be able to proceed with prosecutions.

Scene 21

The recruits are all boarding a bus to go somewhere for their training. We don't know where at this stage but the recruits laugh and carry on a bit as they travel along.

Scene 22

The bus pulls up outside the John Tonge centre. This is a medical facility where two very important things happen. Firstly, it is the Police Forensics laboratory where all scientific testing is undertaken on clothes, blood, bullets, any piece of evidence from a major crime. It is the centre for DNA research and identification for the Police in their prosecutions. It is the place the Forensics Officer was referring to in his class. The second is that it is the city's morgue, where bodies are prepared for display, viewing and autopsy.

The first thing the recruits do is go down to where they keep the bodies and are shown the facility. May and Johnny both looked shocked when they see a dead body. The recruits are shown how to prepare a body for viewing by identification. They are then shown how to examine a body for signs of cause of death. In this scene we will make sure faces are blanked out and the bodies themselves won't be shown, just implied, but we will see the reactions from the recruits.

Scene 23

Afterwards the recruits are taken to the lab where they are shown how DNA evidence is taken and examined. They are shown how DNA is drawn from evidence samples and blood, and how it is prepared for prosecution. Johnny looks very dismayed by all the blood and the process.

Scene 24

Later on we speak to Johnny on the bus back about how he felt seeing the bodies and having to touch them. He explains that in Aboriginal culture the dead are sacred and should not be interfered with. He feels conflicted by this situation – his job and his beliefs.

Scene 25

Johnny and May are at the shooting range where they will have to learn how to handle their weapons. The first session includes having to learn to shoot single handed, which is quite difficult if you have never handled a gun before. Both Johnny and May have difficulty shooting the targets, with May finding it particularly difficult, especially in dealing with the recoil.

Scene 26

We talk to May about how she is finding the training. She tells us that she is probably even more nervous now than she was at the start. She tells us she didn't realise it was going to be like this. What is she going to do? How can she get through 30 weeks of this? There is so much to learn and she realises she isn't that good at many things. May tells us that sometimes she has second thoughts about joining and thinks if she continues she will fail.

Scene 27

It is lunchtime and the recruits are all sitting in the refectory. They are talking amongst each other, about how they are finding everything. We speak to a number of the recruits, both Black and White, about how they are feeling about their training so far.

Scene 28

We are back at the shooting range. The recruits have to do a new series of exercises firing their weapons at targets in low light situations, while moving and even using barricades. These are very difficult specialised manouvers. This are be very testing for the recruits and the two of them, like the majority of the recruits, find it quite difficult to get it right. They fall into each other, bump into things, shoot the wrong targets or miss them altogether.

Scene 29

It is nighttime and the sounds of rap music spread out across the suburbs of Inala. This is a Blue Light Disco, a police run disco for young people under the age of 16 – no cigarettes or alcohol. Johnny has volunteered to supervise the event. But there are hundreds of kids who are all running around and it is obvious some have smuggled booze in. Johnny wades through the chaos to deal with the kids, but you can see it is a hand full. Inala is Brisbane's most well known multi-cultural suburb and there is an eclectic mix of Aboriginal, Vietnamese, Middle Eastern and African kids. There is a lot of gang mentality here.

Scene 30

Outside the disco we speak to some of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous kids about how they feel seeing an Aboriginal Police Officer on their turf. Does it make them change their minds about the Law when they see one of their own in a uniform? What do the non-Indigenous kids think?

Scene 31

We are back on the shooting range. The recruits are having to ramp up their skills in firearms. Now it is the time where they have to use lethal force. Their knowledge and skills that they have learnt in previous scenarios is now going to be tested in realistic scenarios. They are going to have to undertake building approaches, entry and searching, using their firearms. There can be no mistakes here, because a mistake here could mean a mistake out there, and that could mean a life, which means a criminal's or their own.

Both Johnny and May are tense and obviously nervous, but like emerging professionals they are starting to come to grips with it, although you can tell May is having some trouble handling such a large weapon. She fumbles a few times and almost nearly drops the gun – a big no-no in a situation like this. Her facilitator notices the problems she is having.

Scene 32

We speak to May about why she is having difficulty with the weapons handling. She tells us she has always felt nervous about guns and having to carry and use one in her job is intimidating. She tells us that she needs help – fast – or else this could be then end of it.

Scene 33

The recruits are lining up for their class in "Offences against the person". Here they are shown how to deal with domestic violence, assault causing bodily harm, assaulting a police officer and serious assault (rape, unlawful wounding, grievous bodily harm and sexual assault), child protection and dealing with stalking. They go through how to investigate these situations, interviewing victims, and what to do in an arrest. Some of these can be the

worst crimes against people, short of murder, and the sensitivity towards the victims is highlighted.

Scene 34

May is on the shooting range with her instructor, just the two of them. He is helping her with her weapon position, aiming and firing strategies and moving targets. She seems as though she is becoming more confident, but still making mistakes.

Scene 35

The recruits are having to go through their community safety practical. Here they have to undertake a missing persons case and deal with people with mental illness and possibly detain them for hospital treatment, as well as learning how to cope with people and their families who have undergone a death or some trauma. Again, Johnny seems particularly upset by this process.

Scene 36

We speak to Johnny after this session. Why does he seem so particularly upset when having to deal with issues of death and family tragedy?

Scene 37

The dog squad is going through training with the recruits. Johnny is excited to see the animals and pets them. The dog handlers explain under what sort of circumstances dogs are used to bring down a culprit. One of the recruits are asked to get dressed in the padded attack suit and Johnny is more than eager. Once kitted up he is instructed to make a run for it. The dogs are released and they quickly bring Johnny down.

Scene 38

It is getting dark. On the weapons range a solitary silhouetted figure goes through the motions of target practice. Aim, fire, move. Aim, fire, move.

Scene 39

The recruits are faced with a group of people from the Victims of Crime Association. They are faced with stories of what it is like to be assaulted, be raped, to have someone in your family murdered. The recruits sit stony faced in silence as they listen to the horrific stories and see the emotion in the people's faces.

Scene 40

This is the final test for the shooting skills of the recruits. They have to demonstrate their firearms abilities in an 'open' and realistic shooting environment where the threat level is unknown and the response has to be

appropriate with the threat. Johnny moves through first and he seems to be coping very well. His responses are quick and accurate and he gets through the course simply. Then May picks up her weapon and moves to her forward. She is ready to go.....

Scene 41

We talk to May about how she will feel if she doesn't make it through the weapons training course. Will this be the end for her?

Scene 42

May begins to move through the barricades course stealthily. Targets come out and she takes them down one by one. But then she misses one and you can see the look of disappointment on her face. This could be it. It could all fall apart now. But just when it seems all is lost, she comes back and takes out her last few targets in quick succession. May moves to the end of the course and realises she has made it through successfully. The other recruits gather round and she has a smile on her face from ear to ear.

Scene 43

We talk to May about the exuberance she has felt in overcoming a huge obstacle to her training. She feels like now she can take on anything.

Fade out

Fade in

Clips from the next episode

Episode 2

Intro scene

Clips from previous week's episode.

Scene 1

A car swerves at high speed and goes into a long skid, which it comes out of by gunning the engine hard. The driver puts the car into a fishtail skid and seems like he has lost control of the car. But at the last second he gets control of it and screechers off at high speed. Johnny sits at the wheel of the police car looking happy with himself but the instructor doesn't look so enthused.

Scene 2

May hits the mat hard. Her assailant stands over her. She quickly regains her composure and leaps back up, grabbing the arm of the attacker and spilling him onto the ground. But this is not a regular street mugging. This is the first

stage of the the Police Operational Skills class, where the recruits are taught many skills dealing with self-defense and arrest.

The title appears on-screen – ***“Urban Trackers”***. This then fades and another title appears ***“Week 10”***.

Scene 3

The police car Johnny is driving screeches to a halt. We talk to Johnny who tells us that he has just been undertaking his Driver Training unit. He tells us he was just undertaking high speed manouveres and skid control. He didn't find it too difficult because it was just like banging about in the ute back home in Cunnamulla.

Scene 4

We are now with May. She tells us that she has been doing her Police Operation Skills and Tactics Assessment. In other words, self defense and the use of defensive equipment to subdue out of control suspects. This is as physical as it gets and it takes a lot out of the recruits, especially as their instructors really puts them through their paces. May tells us she is not used to so much activity but that she finds it quite an enjoyable challenge.

Scene 5

We are at the pool. 200 metres, any stroke. This is a difficult thing for Johnny, someone who has never seen the inside of a swimming pool before and whose only experience of water is jumping around in the local water holes around Cunnamulla, when there was the occasional summer storm. Most of the other recruits, including May, are strong swimmers.

Scene 6

We speak to Johnny's Instructor about the difficulties Johnny is experiencing in the pool. What can be done for him?

Scene 7

The recruits are being put through a class on how to identify an illegal drug laboratory. They are shown the different sorts of chemicals and equipment that can be found in these illicit labs and how to deal with the arrests of suspects.

Scene 8

The recruits are sitting in legal class, learning the ins and outs of the laws that allow them to detain and arrest. May takes copious notes but Johnny seems to be having some difficulty getting down the large amount of information presented to them.

Scene 9

We talk to Johnny who tells us he is having a bit of a rough week. Not only is he having difficulty with the swimming but he doesn't like the academic side to policing so much. He thought it would be more action, such as driving and firearms, but he admits that there is a lot to learn in policing in the classroom and he's not quite getting it all. For the first time we see Johnny's confidence come down a little and he seems a bit despondent.

Scene 10

The recruits are on the bus again, heading out on a trip to a real court room to witness justice in action, to see what they have learnt in class enacted in real life. When they get to the court room the recruits file into an open court to see a police prosecutor involved in a case against a defendant. For many of them this is their first time in a court room and the procedures can be both confusing and intimidating.

Scene 11

Back at the Academy the recruits are now faced with three difficult challenges. The first is they have to undertake a mock "drug bust" in a house set up to test the recruits on their new skills in identifying illicit drug lab. Then they have to man a mock police station. Finally, they will have to combine this with what they learnt in the evidence collecting classroom sessions and endure a mock "court trial" where they have to present their evidence and act as prosecutors. But first they will have to do their preparation.

Scene 12

Both Johnny and May move up to the house quickly. They work their way down the side of the house until they get to the front door. Johnny leaps up and opens the door open and he and May rush in. May and Johnny search the house and find some evidence of drug taking, some GLM and a Marijuana "Bong". All the time the instructors look on.

Scene 13

Some of the recruits, including Johnny and May, are stationed in the Mock Police Station. Here they have to process the "suspected criminals" from the house arrest. Fingerprinting, photographing and other processes. They also have to attend the front desk where other actors come in pretending to be people who need the police.

Scene 14

We are at the mock court room. It is May's turn first and she has to use what she has learnt in the classroom in this practical demonstration. The mock

court looks like the real thing and one of the instructors acts as the judge. May presents her evidence to the court as a Police Witness and speaks eloquently and articulately.

Scene 15

Afterwards May tells us she thoroughly enjoyed playing the role of Police witness and it has made her think that the court room was very interesting.

Scene 16

Johnny tells us he is extremely nervous going into his turn at the mock court. He tells us that he gets very nervous when public speaking and is worried about how it is going to turn out.

Scene 17

Entering the mock court nervously Johnny seems flustered and anxious as he has to present evidence before a pretend judge and defence. Johnny is obviously scared of having to do this in front of the other recruits. He feels the pressure of scrutiny by not only his peers but his instructors. He sits at the witness box, fiddling with his notes. When he is asked to present his evidence he stumbles his words and seems quite confused. It's like watching a train wreck. Johnny's testimony collapses.

Scene 18

We speak to Johnny afterwards and he is absolutely distraught at how poor he performed in the mock court. That, coupled with his performance in the pool and in some of his classes means that if he doesn't lift his game he could be shown the door at the Academy.

Scene 19

There is lots of laughing and carrying-on in the dorms. It is time for the recruits to let their hair down for the first time because it is just before the Christmas break. The recruits are getting dressed up in lounge suits and dresses. They are getting ready to go out on a night on the town, something that doesn't happen too often, which makes it all the more exciting for them.

Scene 20

It is May and Johnny's first night out with the recruits. They are down in the Fortitude Valley, the party hot-spot of Brisbane. It is a Friday night and the place is already jumping by 9pm. Bar patrons spill out onto the street and the pumping bass from many live venues and nightclubs drones on into the night. A number of City Murries are hanging around on the steps of an old church, at the entrance to the train station, down the bottom end of the mall. Johnny waves at them but he doesn't get much of a response. He thinks they are trying to figure out what this young Murri guy is doing hanging out with a

bunch of white kids? When the recruits go into a bar Johnny and May are sized up by the bouncers, as often happens. You can tell that if they hadn't been in with the other white recruits they wouldn't have gotten in.

Scene 21

Inside the club we see the recruits partying on. Johnny is talking to a group of girls while May gets down on the dancefloor with some of the other recruits.

Scene 22

The night with the recruits goes on. They come out of the bar and straight into some trouble in the mall, a scuffle between uniformed police and one of the local Indigenous groups. A few Murries are being led into a paddy wagon. We see the reactions of Johnny and May.

Scene 23

It is the next morning. May is a bit bleary eyed as she prepares breakfast in her accommodation block. Thankfully it's a Saturday and they are all soon leaving for the 2 week Christmas break. But while May tucks into her breakfast Johnny is seen with a beach towel over his shoulder heading over towards the pool.

Scene 24

May is packing her gear up getting ready to go back home for a few weeks. She tells us she is feeling much better in these past few weeks than she had earlier on. She is ready to leave the Academy and head home.

Scene 25

Johnny is in the pool alternating between using a kick board and free-style swimming.

Fade out

Fade in

Scene 26

Cunnamulla. Johnny is hanging around in the park with his friends, just like when we first met him. Even though he has only been away for a couple of months we ask him how his perception of his home and his friends have changed. Does he look upon things differently, with a "police" attitude?

Scene 27

We talk to some of Johnny's friends. Do they think of him differently now? Can they see a change in him?

Scene 28

May is at home with her family. We ask them whether they notice any differences in May since she has been gone. We also talk to May about being back in her home town. She tells us she really has missed her family over her time away and having to go back to the Academy again is something she is looking forward to but with a tinge of regret.

Scene 29

Johnny's family are sitting around celebrating Christmas day. There's party poppers, beer, wine and a whole lot of roast chicken and other foods. Johnny tells us, away from his family, that he feels he hasn't been doing very well and feels like leaving the Academy. But does his decision have something to do with the looks he has got from some of the other recruits when he fails at tasks? We leave Johnny sitting on his bed.

Fade out

Fade in

Scene 30

Johnny and May have returned to the Academy and are back in the dorms. Johnny still seems to be down as he unpacks his bag. May says she is keen to get back into the work and the challenges ahead. But the first thing they have to do isn't related to their training....

Scene 31

Some of the recruits, including May, have been picked to work at the Police Commissioner's black tie dinner. The recruits have to work as food servers for the many different tables where the Police senior management are enjoying the evening. May looks stressed but having fun and tells us she never expected to do something like this at the Police Academy.

Scene 32

It is the next morning. Johnny's first session back from holidays. His turn on the mat for self defense. But this time he is having to use a police baton to subdue his assailant, which is a lot trickier than it looks. The instructor shows how to use the baton through a series of defensive moves. Then it is Johnny's turn and he nearly hits himself in the face with it. The instructor goes through the moves with him but it is still a tricky instrument to master. Baton training is one of the most hazardous forms of training around. The recruits are shown how to use their batons to hold a perpetrator as well as hit someone. There are areas where a blow can be delivered and areas which should be avoided, such as the head. But in the heat of an attack landing blows in the appropriate place can be difficult. Johnny does quite well after awhile and is able to use the baton to full effect.

Scene 33

This time it is May's turn to go through the Police Driver Training Course. She admits that she isn't the best driver in the world and is quite nervous. Her first task is to drive through the city traffic at morning peak hour. The cars are bumper to bumper and you can see that a lot of the drivers are a little cautious, and some even a bit alarmed, at the sight of a police car next to, behind, or in front of them. Coming from a country town May has never had to drive in traffic like this and she is finding it very frustrating and she is making many small mistakes.

Scene 34

Johnny has a small black box in his hand. It is a Taser. These were introduced into the Police Service only recently. The instructor shows the squad how the Taser works and how to Taser a target. The electrical charge is strong and rocks the mannequin. Each member of the squad must approach the target by themselves and attempt to Taser it. It being a fiddly piece of equipment and very different to a pistol it takes some getting used to for the recruits. But now it is asked for one of the recruits to step forward and volunteer to take a charge. Johnny puts his hand up but May beats him to the punch, which surprises the others. She is hit with the charge and she falls to the ground. Afterwards we speak to her about what it was like.

Scene 35

May is undertaking the driving obstacle course at both high and low speeds. She is quite good at the low speed manoeuvring but she has difficulty steering the car through the high speed and hits a lot of the obstacles. She hits the steering wheel in frustration.

Scene 36

May tells us that she has felt frustrated at her physical efforts throughout her time at the Academy. She says that she feels like most of the other recruits are better than her at the activities and that they judge her for being not as good as them. Once or twice she has shown that she can be as good as the best of them, but this doesn't happen too often. She has to find her 'edge' if she is going to get through.

Scene 37

May walks into the gymnasium where many of the squad members already are waiting. Today is the day for unarmed combat and arrest holds. The instructor goes over the routines they will be doing. May is put in a position where she has to put an arrest hold on a much larger man. She circles him and goes in but the man easily deflects her attempts to grab him. She tries again but fails. This is going to take some time to get used to.

Scene 38

Johnny is in the deep end of the pool. Literally and figuratively. This is his last chance to gain his Bronze medal. He has to go through a series of swimming styles and resuscitation procedures. He kicks off from the side of the pool and starts his freestyle stroke slowly up the pool. Johnny starts to gain speed as he gets half way along.

Scene 39

A car speeds up and fishtails through some orange traffic cones. It then revs off at high speed between some more obstacles, goes around some tight corners and stops on a dime. The driver inside is looking smugly happy with herself. May has passed the driving course.

Scene 40

Johnny clasps one of the other recruits under the chin as he sidestrokes through the water to the side of the pool. He drags the recruit out and struggles to lie him out on the bare concrete pavers. Johnny bends the head of the recruit backwards, leans over it and begins breathing into his mouth. The instructor looks on.

Scene 41

Johnny comes out of the pool change rooms with his bag and his towel around his shoulders. He tells us that he found the swimming and resuscitation very challenging and he won't find out for a week if he passed or not. If he hasn't he won't be able to go on and will have to leave.

Scene 42

May is once again in the gymnasium with the squad. She is once again confronted by the instructor who circles her menacingly. They face off against each other. The instructor gets the better of May and gets her off balance, throwing her on the ground. May gets up quickly though. They circle each other again. Then May goes in. This time she is successful and even though the man is bigger than her she is able to trip him over and wrench his arm behind his back and get him into an arrest hold. She slaps the handcuffs on him and holds him down, with a grin on her face.

Scene 43

Johnny is sitting on his bed with a letter. It is his Bronze medal in life saving. He grins from ear to ear. He tells us he is ecstatic about passing. But he is still worried that he is not doing so well academically and that exams are coming up soon.

Fade out

Fade in

Clips from the next episode

Episode 3

Intro Scene

Clips from last week's episode.

Scene 1

May is puffing, grunting and straining as she attempts to drag two 75 kilogram weighted bag in the gym, which is quite difficult considering each bag is heavier than she is. This is part of the Urban Environment Simulator where the recruits have to pretend to be saving two average weighted people from a crisis situation. This is a hard slog as the bags are dead weights and May has to cover over 35 metres. And May looks beat.

Scene 2

Two cars that are placed close together to mock up a car "incident". Police officers try desperately to rescue the people inside the cars, led by Johnny. But this isn't a real situation, it's a simulation. It's Traffic Incident Management and the recruits are here to deal with the a major car accident. Johnny has to help rescue the accident 'victims'. Then he has to undertake an investigation into the reasons why the incident occurred. This takes an observational eye, a keen eye. Does Johnny have it?

The title appears on-screen – ***"Urban Trackers"***. This then fades and another title appears ***"The Last Weeks...."***.

Scene 3

May tells us that there isn't much more they could throw at her. She's exhausted both mentally and physically. And yet the toughest part isn't over yet. The recruits have to undertake real station duty as well as their exams. She feels so tired but there is so much more to go. Now that we're down to the business end of it all, there is no room for self-doubt. May tells us that they have only a few more weeks to go – a few weeks of hard slog as each of them will be sent out to a police station to work along side regular police officers and walk the beat. Is she nervous about being out on some of the mean streets of Brisbane, in some of the roughest suburbs?

Scene 4

Johnny has a confident smile on his face. He tells us that he really feels like he is becoming a real police officer. And he's sure he'll do fine over the remaining few weeks. No problem.

Scene 5

Johnny is sitting in a classroom being lectured on the principles of the law. While the others around him are writing furiously into their notepads, Johnny sort of just stares around the room.

Scene 6

In a small room a young man sits, beads of sweat on his brow. He looks furtively around the room. May enters the room and sits across from him sizing him up. She begins to question him about a car that was stolen recently. She writes down what the man has to say and questions him further. But this isn't a real suspect. May is learning interview techniques not with a criminal, but her instructor.

Scene 7

Meanwhile, Johnny is with the cars again, but this time he is learning how to perform manual traffic control and correct hand signals. This is a bit tricky as he is learning these things in the middle of a road with real flow-through traffic. If he messes up here accidents could happen. Serious ones.

Scene 8

All of the recruits are sitting in class. At the front of the class are two Indigenous people. No, not Johnny and May or any of the other of the Indigenous recruits. These people are from Murri Watch, the group that helps Aboriginal people when they get put in lock up. The recruits are explained things from an Indigenous perspective and how getting put in jail affects them. Deaths in custody are also discussed.

Scene 9

May tells us how glad she was that all the recruits had to sit through the Murri Watch seminar. That it was good that the Indigenous point of view was put forward to all of the recruits and that, hopefully, this will lead to some understanding of the plight of some Murri's.

Fade out

Fade in

Scene 10

The recruits are all assembled together in a hall. The head instructor explains to them that they will now each be undertaking two weeks at a police station. Here they will be working on real life situations, dealing with real criminals and the general public through a whole range of situations. This will be their on-duty work experience program and through this they will learn whether or not they can actually make it as real police officers.

Scene 11

Johnny is getting ready in his room. He tells us that they are now down to the business end of it all he is quite keen to get out there and start mixing it with the real criminals. He's ready for anything.....

Scene 12

Meanwhile, May is getting things organised in her room. She is looking forward to the practical policing methods she will now get to use in a 'real world' situation. She tells us this will be her opportunity to demonstrate to everyone what she has learned. Her opportunity to shine....

Scene 13

As part of an introduction to the environment of the police station all the recruits have to make their first visit to the Watch House. This is a large building in the centre of the City where all people arrested are placed in holding cells. Also people who have been remanded and are awaiting trial. The recruits are taken into the Watch House where they are taken through the many security sections until they reach the inner administration area. Here they are shown where the arrested have their photos and fingerprints taken. They are then shown the holding cells where the usual collection of drunks, petty thieves and low level criminals mix. The worst part for Johnny and May is seeing some Indigenous people in the cells.

Further along the Watch house are holding cells where people who have been recently arrested for more serious crimes or are in remand waiting for court appearances are held. This is a series of cells and rooms where a mix of police, suspects, solicitors and court staff mingle.

Scene 14

May has been taken to an inner city police station at South Brisbane. This is a particularly busy police station which services a mix of very low and very high socio-economic groups, light industry and businesses, a high drug and alcohol addicted group many of whom live in run down boarding houses or on the street, and a large disenfranchised Indigenous population. Many of the charity organisations, like St Vinnies, have hostels here. It also happens to be the main Cultural precinct which rests on the edge of the CBD. For May, the country girl from the nice family, this is going to be one eye opening placement for her.

Scene 15

Johnny is also at his placement for the next few weeks. This station is a bit further out, in one of the outer suburbs of Brisbane, in a place called Logan City (a satellite city). It also has high unemployment and lots of crime. It is a melting pot of different ethnic and Indigenous groups, similar to the western

suburbs of Sydney. There is a lot here for the police to do.

Scenes 16-31

We will follow May and Johnny around as they themselves become observers of how trained police officers deal with and confront crimes and criminals of all persuasion. It will be a mix of thefts, domestic violence, drunkenness, drugs, minor assaults, shoplifting, and other petty crimes. Sometimes they will be asked to assist in dealing with white and Indigenous peoples. We will constantly be going back to both of them to talk about how they feel about their experiences and how they are coping.

We will also see both May and Johnny helping with police officers dealing with a motley assortment of criminals and the public at the Police station and see how they mix it with their fellow officers and more experienced police. We will see many of the techniques they have learnt and developed at the Academy in practical application on the mean streets of Brisbane. They will face many challenges during this time and will be pushed to the limit. Here they will have to see if they are made of the 'right stuff' or if the Police Service is not for them.

Scene 32

We speak to May about how she has felt about the past two weeks working on the mean streets of the Valley.

Scene 33

Johnny tells us that his time at the station was an eye opening experience and he never realised how difficult police work could be until he had to deal with the public.

Scene 34

Johnny and May are back at the Academy. After the couple of weeks spent at their respective police stations, they seem relieved to be back at a place that is a bit more ordered, a bit more 'safe'. They only have a couple of weeks left to go and they have to get through their last exams.

Scene 35

The library is crowded with recruits going through their text books. In one corner sits Johnny, pouring over his books and looking very worried.

Scene 36

May is going through the library shelves, choosing different books and taking notes.

Scene 37

It is exam time. All of the recruits sit in a large hall doing their exams. Johnny and May sit across the exam hall from each other as they undertake their finals.

Scene 38 (montage)

Both Johnny and May are being examined as to a series of physical tests including their holds, hand cuffing, unarmed defense and other things they have learned throughout the past 30 weeks.

Scene 39

May sits on her bed talking to us about how she thinks she went throughout the course, and most importantly, if she will pass. She says she thinks she did well in the exams, but isn't so sure about all of the physical tests. She will just have to wait and see.

Scene 29

All of the recruits are lining up on the Parade Ground. They organise into rows. They are smiling and laughing. A man appears at the front of them setting up a piece of equipment. It is the time for the Group Photograph of this year's class.

Scene 30

Johnny sits on his bed with a letter in his hand. He looks concerned. He tells us that he just got his exam results back. They are in his hand. How did he go? Did he pass?

Scene 31

A drum beats. Cymbals clang. A horn is blown. We're on a parade ground, a large expanse of flat land covered in bitumen. To one side there is a stand full of people and in front of them, in rows, are the recruits lined up. The recruits that have passed their exams and their tests and are now graduating from the Academy. Among the ranks we see May and Johnny in their new passing out uniforms. In the crowd we see some familiar faces – Johnny and May's parents and family. We talk to them about how they feel about seeing their children in uniform. Johnny and May say goodbye to the other recruits who are all being sent out to different police stations. Even though they will probably see them again professionally, this will be the last time they will be as a whole unit. There are lots of hugs and fond goodbyes and the odd tear.

Fade to black....

Fade in....

Scene 31

It is some weeks later. And we are not in Brisbane anymore. We are back in May's home town. May decided that it was better for her to transfer back to

her home town, rather than stay in Brisbane. Being a newly graduated recruit she must walk the beat for a few years and get used to the rudimentary duties of a police officer. The streets of Townsville, a working class, semi-industrial, semi-rural, semi-mining town with a large Indigenous population at the gates of the tourist Mecca of the Whitsundays. With its mix of blue collar mine workers, dusty farmers, cosmopolitan townsfolk, local Murries and cashed-up tourists the town can be quite a melting pot, and a hot spot of trouble.

The police travel on the beat in packs, it being far too dangerous for them to go it alone. May walks down the street one night with two other constables. She recognises many of the local people as she patrols down the main street. She approaches groups of Indigenous kids, hanging out in the mall. She talks to them about what they are doing, what they plan to do during the night, always keeping a friendly demeanour about herself. After this we talk to May about how she feels about being in the QPS now. Will she stay with it? What does it mean to her Aboriginality to be in the Service? Does she feel like she has changed the way that the QPS and Indigenous people relate to each other, treat each other? Or does she think that in some way she has compromised her own people, by siding with the 'other side'. We leave May as she walks down the Mall of her home town....

Scene 32

We are back where we left off at the beginning of the film. Johnny has been posted to the Fortitude Valley Police Station, one of the toughest Beats in Queensland. He walks down the street with a number of other Police. There are young adults everywhere, a chaotic mess as it is always every Friday and Saturday night. Lots of kids look drunk or on drugs and are yelling at each other and making a lot of noise. Random fights break out spontaneously. The homeless and Indigenous hang around on the fringes, not really part of the action but ready to be part of it. Johnny has to deal with it all.

We talk to Johnny about his new job. Coming from Cunnamulla did he ever expect police work would be like this? Does he wish he could return to his old life? How does he feel when he has to deal with his own people? Johnny seems harassed and distracted, as if the job is overwhelming him. Johnny tells us that he is finding the job much different from training, because now he is dealing with real people, not just instructors. We leave Johnny as his Police Beat shop front in the Valley becomes crowded with people.

The End